

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A driver for a system component sensor device in a computer system, comprising:  
a diagnostic mode of operation configured for enabling selective execution of  
diagnostic functionality on a corresponding system component sensor  
5 device while concurrently permitting execution of system management to  
be performed via system component sensors in a system management  
mode of operation.
2. The driver of claim 1 wherein the diagnostic mode of operation includes disabling the  
corresponding system component device with respect to system management  
10 functionality and access by non-diagnostic users.
3. The driver of claim 1 wherein said diagnostic functionality includes at least one of:  
issuing a message indicating that the corresponding system component sensor  
device is inaccessible when accessed by a non-diagnostic user while the  
corresponding system component sensor device is in the diagnostic mode  
15 of operation;  
issuing a message to the non-diagnostic user indicating that the corresponding  
system component sensor device is transitioning to the diagnostic mode of  
operation from the system management mode of operation; and  
issuing a message to the non-diagnostic user indicating that the corresponding  
20 system component sensor device is transitioning to the system  
management mode of operation from the diagnostic mode of operation.
4. The driver of claim 1, further comprising:  
at least one of a parent device driver interface and a child device drive  
interface.

5. The driver of claim 1, further comprising:
- a parent driver device interface configured for controlling modes of operation of a group of child sensor devices; and
  - a plurality of child device driver interfaces each configured for controlling modes of operation of a respective one of said child sensor devices,
- 5 wherein the corresponding system component sensor device is one of said sensor devices and is set to the diagnostic mode of operation using one of said device driver interfaces.

6. A method for facilitating diagnostic functionality in a computer system, comprising:  
setting a designated sensor device of a system component to a diagnostic mode  
of operation;  
5 executing system management functionality on system components served by  
non-designated sensor devices while the designated sensor device is in the  
diagnostic mode of operation; and  
executing diagnostic functionality on the designated sensor device while  
executing said system management functionality and while the designated  
10 sensor device is in the diagnostic mode of operation.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein:  
said setting to the diagnostic mode of operation includes setting a device driver  
corresponding to the designated sensor device to the diagnostic mode of  
operation.
- 15 8. The method of claim 6 wherein:  
said setting to the diagnostic mode of operation includes simultaneously  
setting a plurality of sensor devices to the diagnostic mode of operation;  
and  
the designated sensor device is one of said sensor devices.
- 20 9. The method of claim 6 wherein executing said diagnostic functionality includes at least  
one of:  
issuing a message indicating that the corresponding system component sensor  
device is inaccessible when accessed by a non-diagnostic user while the  
corresponding system component sensor device is in the diagnostic mode  
25 of operation;

issuing a message to the non-diagnostic user indicating that the corresponding  
system component sensor device is transitioning to the diagnostic mode of  
operation from the system management mode of operation; and  
issuing a message to the non-diagnostic user indicating that the corresponding  
5 system component sensor device is transitioning to the system  
management mode of operation from the diagnostic mode of operation.

10. The method of claim 6 wherein:

said setting to the diagnostic mode of operation includes disabling the  
designated sensor device from at least one of providing system  
10 management functionality and being accessed by non-diagnostic users.

11. A computer system, comprising:

at least one data processing device;

instructions processable by said at least one data processing device; and

5 an apparatus from which said instructions are accessible by said at least one data processing device;

wherein said instructions are configured for enabling said at least one data processing device to facilitate:

10 setting a designated sensor device of a system component to a diagnostic mode of operation;

executing system management functionality on system components served by non-designated sensor devices while the designated sensor device is in the diagnostic mode of operation; and

15 executing diagnostic functionality on the designated sensor device while executing said system management functionality and while the designated sensor device is in the diagnostic mode of operation.

12. The computer system of claim 11 wherein:

20 said setting to the diagnostic mode of operation includes setting a device driver corresponding to the designated sensor device to the diagnostic mode of operation.

13. The computer system of claim 11 wherein:

said setting to the diagnostic mode of operation includes simultaneously

25 setting a plurality of sensor devices to the diagnostic mode of operation;

and

the designated sensor device is one of said sensor devices.

14. The computer system of claim 11 wherein executing said diagnostic functionality includes at least one of:

5 issuing a message indicating that the corresponding system component sensor device is inaccessible when accessed by a non-diagnostic user while the corresponding system component sensor device is in the diagnostic mode of operation;

issuing a message to the non-diagnostic user indicating that the corresponding system component sensor device is transitioning to the diagnostic mode of operation from the system management mode of operation; and

10 issuing a message to the non-diagnostic user indicating that the corresponding system component sensor device is transitioning to the system management mode of operation from the diagnostic mode of operation.

15. The computer system of claim 11 wherein:

15 said setting to the diagnostic mode of operation includes disabling the designated sensor device from at least one of providing system management functionality and being accessed by non-diagnostic users.

16. The computer system of claim 11 wherein:

20 said data processing instructions comprises a device driver including at least one of a parent device driver interface and a child device drive interface; and

said setting the designated sensor device of a system component to a diagnostic mode of operation is facilitated using at least one of the parent driver device interface and the child drive interface.

17. The computer system of claim 11 wherein:

25 said data processing program comprises a parent driver device interface configured for controlling modes of operation of a group of child sensor devices and child device driver interface configured for controlling a

respective mode of operation of a respective one of said child sensor devices; and

said setting the designated sensor device of a system component to a diagnostic mode of operation is facilitated using at least one of the parent driver device interface and the child drive interface.

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